



Transcript: Introductory Video: From Class to Classify: Effective Research-Based Vocabulary Instruction

Hello and welcome to the introductory video From Class to Class: Effective Research-Based Vocabulary Instruction for Adult ESOL Learners. We're going to spend a few moments together here to dive a bit deeper with elements one and two of our reading earlier in this module, Elements of Effective Vocabulary Instruction.

The Center for Applied Linguistics has identified four elements of recommended practice for vocabulary instruction based on their research and the research of others in the field: providing a rich and motivating language environment, strategically selecting and instructing high-utility words, promoting independent word learning, and using assessment to inform instruction. The combination of these strategies, when regularly integrated into language instruction, will support students' ongoing vocabulary development.

We will focus on the first two elements here prior to our first virtual session time together. A bit later, we will share a second video which will provide more information about the third and fourth elements.

First, let's look at creating a rich and motivating language environment within our classroom. This is a word cloud of the key words from the first part of the text, Elements of Effective Vocabulary Instruction, Element 1. You can see the important words scaled by size according to their frequency in the text. It is clear that words are at the heart of creating a rich and motivating language development environment. Essential to developing a broad and deep base of vocabulary, English language learners need a wide variety of meaningful interactions using targeted words, opportunities to read, write, speak, and hear targeted language via stories, role-plays, interactive activities such as running dictation or interviews, along with cultivation of a growing understanding of how English words are put together and their uses in different contexts.

Finally, to ensure that a word sticks, we need to offer a wide variety of activities for practice if students are to encounter a word eight to ten times, which is what is recommended for vocabulary to stay in a learner's memory. A few activities that may come to mind include graphic organizers or flashcards, dictation, or having students interact with illustrations or photos using vocabulary words as descriptors, having students review text and highlight vocabulary words, or practice with choral repetition. Partner work may help students to cement new vocabulary in an authentic conversation or by using provided sentence stems, and there are many reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities that can emphasize vocabulary words and provide a rich and motivating language environment.

In order to foster a rich and motivating language environment, we must promote incidental word learning through listening, reading, speaking, and writing in a stimulating environment. In class discussions, use previously learned words to maintain word knowledge and gradually introduce

new words. Encourage students to read books and other types of texts to promote vocabulary growth. We also must provide opportunities for students to engage with and find words in their environment, for example, words on signs in stores and advertising materials, on roads, or looking for examples of certain parts of speech while reading, picking a new word and trying to use it during the day in conversation, and engaging with realia.

Important also is to cultivate word consciousness, which we're going to talk some more about right now. You may wonder, what is word consciousness? Word consciousness encompasses many things but mostly it suggests an awareness of words in the environment. By bringing attention to words in everyday life and encouraging students to pay attention to words they encounter, we can nurture their interest in words and their motivation to learn them. We can also help students to understand the power of words and to be curious about how and why specific words are used. Finally, by regularly promoting word consciousness as a habitual attitude, we encourage students to become adept learners and users of vocabulary.

Now we'll turn our attention to element two in our reading from *Elements of Effective Vocabulary Instruction*, with a focus on strategic word selection and instruction. The word shift of this section of the text indicates words using different colors; in this case, the blue words are all from the Academic Word List, which means that they are high-priority words that occur across subject areas, which in fact is the focus of this element: how to select which words to instruct.

In this section, we will explore several guiding questions: how do you choose words for instruction, which words do students need to know, what is the most appropriate intensity and frequency of instruction, and how do we prevent cognitive overload? These elements occur often in tier two general academic words, which require particular instructional attention. Tier two words are often vital to comprehension, will reappear in many texts and across subject areas, and are frequently part of word families or semantic networks. These words may have multiple meanings depending on context, so while students may be familiar with the definition for a word's most traditional use, they may be unfamiliar with other uses. For instance, in these examples, a student may know the term function as a verb that describes something working properly but not as a mathematical action or a spreadsheet calculation.

A few final considerations related to selection of words for instruction: because it is easier to learn a word that can be visualized, instruction with pictures, animations, gestures, and non-linguistic representations that make words more imageable for students is most helpful. The most effective approach to vocabulary instruction depends on the level of students in a class. Literacy and beginner levels may need more rich oral language discussion and song, while students with higher literacy levels may require more in-depth analysis of words, word meanings, relationships between words, nuances, and word usage.

Think about how much intensity you will devote to each particular word. Is it an extremely worthwhile word? Then you'll go deep and spend more time in extended instruction, engaging students and using the targeted word through multimodal activities that promote deep processing of word meanings. Is it a word that is good to know but not essential? Perhaps you touch it on the fly as you are reading a text together, or if it's imageable, you can make that image and

you're all set. These are examples of paraphrased instruction: word meanings that are rephrased with a simple definition and a sentence or image that helps to contextualize the word. Finally, by offering reading time and texts and providing a wide range of activities across all skill areas, you can promote incidental vocabulary acquisition.

As with other parts of language learning, there is a big emphasis on repeated and spiral exposure to vocabulary. Studies show that a student must interact with a word at least eight times to integrate it into their own knowledge and have it stick. A word may be encountered more frequently soon after initial instruction, and as time goes by more and more space is given between encounters. You may want to plan intentional opportunities to revisit previously studied vocabulary to ensure that students will be able to recall and use these words. Really significant words will naturally recur in life and academic contexts. These are words that students really need to know and will learn from the recurring exposure.

There are several strategies that are essential to prevent cognitive overload for students, as the quantity of new vocabulary can overwhelm and frustrate students if it is not managed carefully. First, make sure to screen and select text with no more than five to ten percent new words. Students must understand at least ninety percent of words in a reading to be able to successfully navigate the meaning. This is an example of comprehensible input, the idea of $i + 1$ part of second language acquisition. Research has shown that input must be understandable for learning to occur, and when too many words are unknown, students will have a hard time using context and other clues to make sense of reading. As a general rule, try to limit new vocabulary to approximately ten-word sets and adjust your instruction to student learning capacity. This is where knowing your students and their strengths and challenges is really important.

Thank you so much for your time and attention. We look forward to seeing you in Virtual Session One, where we will delve more deeply into our reading.